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# Foreign Missions

An Evidence of Christianity

..BY..

**Mrs. John Henry Barrows.**

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## AN EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

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BY MRS. JOHN HENRY BARROWS.

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This paper was read by Mrs. Barrows at the Annual Union Meeting of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Boards of Chicago, Y. M. C. A. Auditorium, Jan. 5, '98. The subject of the meeting was Phil. 4:17, "Gifts as Fruit-bearing."

WHEN Paul the aged, a prisoner in Rome, sent his love-letter to the church in Philippi, he gave as one reason for the rejoicing which appears in every chapter, the knowledge that the seed, spiritual seed, which he had sowed among them years before, has sprung up and is now bearing fruit. It is a secondary matter to him that he himself is the recipient of the fruit, for he hastens to say after each mention of their gifts to him, "Not that I speak in respect to want, for I have

learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," or, "But I have all and abound." His real reason for joy is that he has been permitted in his own lifetime to see proofs of their life. As he looks over the parts of Europe and Asia, where he preached, he sees a great garden; he planted, Apollos and others have watered, he has seen tiny shoots, kind purposes, put forth; he has seen the leaves and buds and blossoms of beautiful Christian graces appear; he now receives gifts from them, and realizes that the fruits by which Christians are to be known have been finally produced!

And Paul would have rejoiced still more could he have looked down the centuries until now, and have seen, not only the life and vigor of the Christian Church as evidenced by its great gifts, but also that these fruits, the unselfish offerings of consecrated hearts, are everywhere accepted as the evidence of the truth of Christianity *which it is impossible to answer.* We

in America and Europe may think that the fruits of Christianity, as shown in our civilization, ought to be enough to show to non-Christians the superior life and vigor of our religion. But our civilization has two sides, and it is the "seamy side" which is invariably looked upon by them. They learn from General Booth's "Darkest London" and Mr. W. T. Stead's "If Christ Came to Chicago," and the telegrams in every newspaper, of corruption and iniquity abounding in our great cities, and the "fruits" by which Jesus said we were to be known, do not appear to them very desirable. But the "fruits" which they see in the form of gifts to their poor, food for the famished, medicine and nursing for the plague-smitten, and teaching for the ignorant, are an evidence of the truth of Christianity absolutely insurmountable.

When the missionaries first came to India, they were looked upon with contempt. Their religion was a mushroom

of yesterday, compared with the Hindu religion, as old as the Ganges and the Himalayas; the Christian religion was considered not only young but also as immoral; for did not Englishmen claim to be Christians; and yet were not the army and civil service in India filled with open wickedness? But gradually, during these long years of Christian work, it has come to be understood by the more intelligent and honest among them, that all Europeans are not truly Christians, and the fruits of Christianity as evidenced by the truly religious, are making more and more of an impression upon them. Among the native newspapers are many violent haters of Christianity, and when the famine broke out last year, and the mission compounds were gradually filled with children, orphaned by starvation, these newspapers cried out that the missionaries, unable to satisfy themselves with the number of converts gained by argument, were trying to make

India Christian by taking possession of the children! Years ago, this would have elicited no reply from the non-Christian press. But I myself read, in a Hindu journal, a denial of this, and a statement that in feeding and caring for the hungry, the Christians show themselves more full of pity than the maharajahs and the rajahs, who, although their treasuries are filled with silver, neither built shelters for the destitute nor provided them food. And the article contained these words: "If you desire to find the noblest examples of true charity, you must not look to Hinduism, but to Christianity." "The noblest types of character yet evolved by our race are found among many of the Christian missionaries in India." These quotations from a Hindu newspaper show that gifts, whether of money or of lives, are fruit, and are accepted as such by the non-Christian world.

But aside from the fact that it is as impossible to cut off a living church from

foreign missionary work as it is to prevent a living tree from producing fruit; and also that the foreign work is an evidence of the truth of Christianity which is felt at home as well as abroad, it is also true that foreign missionary work appeals to the heart of pity as no other work does. As one finishes a visit through the oriental world, he feels like saying with Paul: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain." O the sum of human misery as it appears to one who looks back over a journey around the world! One can only escape from the burden of it by repeating again and again, "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

But besides making one realize the misery and largeness of the non-Christian world, a journey through mission fields gives one a new idea of the universality of the Spirit of Christ through the Christian

world. We gather month after month in our meetings, and consider usually only the work of our own denomination, and its little handful of missionaries. "What are they among so many?" we ask, with heavy hearts. But although the number of Christian missionaries is far too small, yet they are more than many of us realize. We crossed the great peninsula of Hindustan from west to east and east to west, five times. In Bombay and Ahmednagar and Madura we were among the workers of the American Board, wise, faithful, large-minded. In Benares, Bangalore, Salem and Coimbatore, we saw the work of the London Missionary Society, reaching from Hindus of the highest caste and education down to the wretched pariah ragged-schools; in Calcutta, Darjeeling, Jeypore, Ajmere and Poona, we were with Scotch Presbyterians, pious, earnest and persistent, and in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, we saw the three great Christian Colleges of India, Wilson



College, Duff College and The Christian College, all in the hands of Scotch Presbyterians. In Lucknow and Cawnpore we came across the work of American Methodists, which is now being so signally blessed. We attended the conference at Lucknow and came to know Bishop Thoburn and some of his zealous and consecrated helpers. Bishop Thoburn's work in the villages of North India is limited only by the number of men he can put into the field, and the number of men he can place is limited only by the funds contributed in America. In Delhi, Amritsar, Tinnevely and Palamcotta, we were in the midst of the work of the Established Church of England, Evangelistic, medical and educational, by far the greatest work done in India. In the Tinnevely district alone, they have over a hundred thousand native Christians, and when my husband was urged to remain here over Sunday and preach, he was told that if he did so he would speak to an au-

dience of 1300 Indian Christians, in one church. Bishop Morley, the head of this diocese, confirmed and welcomed to the Lord's table between November and February of last year, over 2000 Indians. We visited the Arcot Mission, where we were in the midst of the work of the Dutch Reformed Church of America, and also the native state of Indore, where the Canadian Presbyterians are wonderfully successful. In Lahore, the great city of the Lodiana Mission, we were among American Presbyterians, and in Madras we met representatives of the American Baptist Mission, who have almost repeated the day of Pentecost among the Telugus.

As I came to realize how great and numerous and mighty were the forces at work, I felt as Elisha's helper did when his eyes were opened and he saw the mountain filled with the Lord's chariots and horsemen. Dear friends, it is true that we are in the midst of a great battle, but we are a part of a great army; it is

true that our campaign is to be a long one, but it is to terminate in no superficial victory. Through years of education and training the non-Christian people are to be taught the reasonableness of Christianity, through hundreds of examples of Christly living, they are to perceive the superior ethical teachings of Christianity, and in God's own time, when these long and trying days of preparation are over, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit is to complete the work for which we are now giving and praying. They that be with us are more than they that be with them, and to-day the wisest and most far-sighted among the leaders of the other religions of the world know that the real battle is no longer between Christianity and either Hinduism, Buddhism, or Mohammedanism, strong and entrenched as all these religions, with their millions of adherents, may appear to a superficial observer, but between Christianity and materialism. The other religions are being

undermined slowly but steadily by education and contact with Christianity.

We have heard for so many years that this is true, that it is a shock to an American Christian to find outwardly the great country of India wholly given up to falsehood and superstition. We visited only large cities, as my husband's mission was to "educated, English-speaking Hindus," and of course only large cities would furnish enough of this class to give him audiences. So we saw only the most civilized and Christianized parts of India. But we saw all the things of which we have heard. I visited Zenanas and talked with Indian ladies, mothers and grandmothers as well as young wives, who had never seen a man outside their own family, who had never left their own house, except when carried in a covered palanquin from their father's home to their husband's; pictures and music, art and literature, mountains, forests and rivers, railway-trains and boats were un-

known to them. I have seen starving people refuse to touch bread that I, unable to bear the sight of their skeleton limbs and wolfish eyes, tried to put into their hands. They were dying of famine, but they would not break their caste.

I have seen lines of pilgrims bearing on their heads great jars full of water which they were carrying through dust and heat and under the terrible sun, 300 miles from the River Ganges to some other river, in order to sanctify its waters.

I have seen hundreds of women, slighted and unloved wives, prostrating themselves before the hideous image of Kali, black, horrible with protruding tongue, and adorned with a necklace of skulls, praying for sons, sons, that their lives might be endurable. I have seen others patiently walking around and around the serpent stones in Bangalore, and I have prayed as I saw them that the God of love might be revealed to them and might answer the prayers which were in their sad hearts.

I have seen hundreds of little child-wives and scores of little child-widows, many of them learning, thank God, that although they are degraded and scorned here they are loved by One who was Himself "despised and rejected of men." I have seen Brahmans and pariahs, fakirs and lepers, the worship of cows and monkeys, and long processions of half naked devotees carrying a hideous, nodding idol down to the sea for his annual bath.

All these things, and many more of which it is impossible to speak, are either practiced or defended by all classes of Hindus. Educated men, graduates of great universities defend and uphold the most disgusting and senseless idolatry, not because they in their hearts believe in Hinduism, but because they sincerely believe that if Hinduism is given up, the national life of India will be destroyed. They publicly take part in idolatrous worship and ostentatiously paint their faces with the symbols of Shiva or Vishnu

in order to show their belief in the religion of their country. When the prime minister of Jeypore, a man of liberal education, great ability, and the real ruler of Jeypore, called upon us, his conversation was of Shakespeare, of whom he was a life-long student. No one would have suspected from his words during his interview that he was not a Christian scholar. And yet, only a few weeks before, he had gone on a long pilgrimage and had washed away his sins in a sacred tank! But the real motive behind that pilgrimage was not religion but patriotism. Hating the British and fearing national annihilation, the educated Hindu is trying to keep the common people loyal to India through loyalty to India's immemorial religion!

But although foreigners are usually either feared or hated, or both, the Christian missionary is both trusted and loved. On the great steamer from China to San Francisco, on which we returned to Am-

erica, were many important people, British civil and military officials going, by way of America, home to England to the Queen's jubilee. Some of these men were famous for their integrity and ability and had labored for years among non-Christian peoples, and always I believe to their advantage. But it was not to accompany any of these, but to say farewell to a humble Christian missionary, who came to America on the same ship, that forty Chinese men came down to the sea, and with tears and sobs, parted from one who had told them the Saviour's love. Dear friends, that Christian missionary was our gift to that dark land, and those weeping Christians were our fruit as well as his. And many Christians now among us will look some day with surprise into unknown faces, bright with love to Christ, and will hear with unspeakable joy the words of our Master saying: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me."

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*Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior,  
Room 602, 59 Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.*